

# The LENINIST

Why the Soviet Union collapsed and what it means for the working class

Special

## Yeltsin's counter-coup: Counterrevolution

Edited version of speech by comrade Jack Conrad, August 25 1991

**C**OMRADES and friends. As we said two years ago, history has unmelting. All the certainties of the cold war have gone. Events are moving like molten lava. Frankly, it's not the direction that surprises us, but the speed. Where the bourgeoisie thought in terms of change happening over years, we thought in months. But on consideration, when it came to August 19, passing as it did beyond the parameters of all previous Soviet history, we should have thought in hours.

What has happened is clear. There was a conservative political coup. But there has also been a Yeltsinite counter-coup, which amounts to a social counterrevolution.

Comrades, we can no longer talk of the USSR in any real sense.

How can we talk about the 'union' of any republics? There is no union. Not only the Baltics, Moldavia and Georgia have declared for independence, but so too has the Ukraine.

What about 'socialist' republics? There is no longer any socialism. Yet in spite of the statements of Yeltsin and Gorbachev, and the fact that bourgeois jubilation is in full swing, some cannot see it. For these hopeless dogmatists, socialism equals nationalised property and capitalism equals the free market. As most industry and agriculture remains nationalised, there can be no capitalism, they argue. Taking the mechanical approach to its logical conclusion, they reason that as states are nothing but a superstructure on top of the socio-economic base, the Soviet state must remain socialist.

So why do we say there is no longer socialism? Well, it's not only that the symbols of the old regime have come crashing down - the statues of Dzerzhinsky, Sverdlov and Lenin; it's not just the return of the old symbols - the flag of Russia, the incense and chants of the Orthodox church on every public occasion, new national anthems and new names for towns and cities. It isn't just Yeltsin's ban on *Pravda*, the suspension of activity of the Russian Communist Party. It's not just that the rats are deserting the CPSU ship. It's not just the resurfacing of old hatreds, nationalism, anti-semitism.

No, it's the nature and programme of the state itself. That leaves us in no doubt that there has been a social counterrevolution.

The government of what is still called the USSR will be chosen by Boris Yeltsin. The president of the Soviet Union is no longer a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. And after initial dilly-dallying, in order to save himself, Gorbachev has ordered the confiscation of all the property of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and demanded that the Central Committee liquidates itself, and therefore, effectively, liquidates the Party itself.

That is counterrevolution. Peaceful and democratic, but counterrevolution nevertheless.

Naturally, there will be those who can't or won't distinguish between revolution and counterrevolution. Some, such as *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror*, the BBC and bourgeois academia will call counterrevolution revolution, simply to create ideological confusion in the minds of the masses. Others do so for reasons of leftist or reformist dogma, or simply an opportunist wish to join in the general celebrations.

For the sake of clarity, let us define revolution and counterrevolution. Revolution is progressive. It is the new overthrowing the old. A counterrevolution is a reversal of a previous revolution and its results, a turning back to the past. Who can doubt what we have in the former USSR? Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin say it's full speed *back* to private property, *back* to capitalist property, and *back* to capitalist social relations.

So what is the state in the USSR now, in class terms? Is there anything for communists, for progressives, for partisans of the working class to defend in it? We would say no.

If we penetrate beneath the swirl of events, the day by day dramatic changes and the transitional forms, it is clear that the bourgeoisie is back; the states within what was the USSR are now theirs. Of course, many, looking at what existed before August 22 - or, for that matter, looking at what has existed for past decades - will say that the Soviet state was authoritarian, bureaucratic and indefensible. We think this approach is understandable but very, very wrong.

Let's put it like this. What would we do if, in the midst of a long drawn out bitter strike, the bureaucrats began using authoritarian measures to maintain the strike, continued to live a privileged lifestyle and some of them began taking bribes from the bosses? Would we abandon the strike? No! We would defend the strike against the bosses and against its misleaders.

What would we do if, under these conditions, a steady trickle of workers began returning to work complaining of hunger and bureaucratic methods. We would still defend the strike, wouldn't we? Well, we would! And if, at a critical moment, the strike collapsed because of betrayal from the top and a mass return from below, would we join the bosses in welcoming the end of the strike? No, we wouldn't - not even if this made us unpopular among workers and bureaucrats alike.

In broad terms, comrades, that is what has happened. In the USSR the strike has been broken. Its 'bureaucratic strike' against capitalism and imperialism has been broken, betrayed from above and exhausted from below. That is why the bourgeoisie is celebrating, why genuine communists should briefly mourn before getting on with the job of organising on the basis of the lessons our defeat in the USSR teaches.

### What now?

In spite of the lightning fall of socialism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, the bourgeoisie cannot quite believe its luck when it comes to the USSR. Albeit in a shattered form - potentially a giant Yugoslavia with a nuclear sting in its tail - it has fallen into their laps. What they expected was a slow spiralling in of the Soviet Union, a controlled process of capitalist restoration. Now the Soviet Union is a satellite, locked in orbit around the imperialist sun.

As I said, they did not expect it. On the day of Gorbachev's return the BBC spoke for the whole bourgeoisie. It went something like this:  
**BBC anchorman:** Is the Soviet Union finished?

**Their man in Moscow:** No, it still remains a powerful force in the world.

**BBC anchorman:** What about Gorbachev?

**Their man in Moscow:** His prestige has somewhat dimmed. Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin are now equals.

**BBC anchorman:** Has the Communist Party of the Soviet Union any future?

**Their man in Moscow:** It remains central to Soviet society. It isn't going to disappear quickly. Yes, it will change; maybe in November it will become some sort of socialist party.

How things move when quantity produces quality! When it comes to society, the modern bourgeoisie is incapable of grasping such an elementary fact. When the counterrevolutionary process reached a certain quantitative stage, change was going to be exceptionally rapid by definition.

Comrades, the consequences of counterrevolution cannot be predicted in detail, but we can and must talk in broad terms. Certainly there is nothing to celebrate. Those who are doing so are either stupid, misguided, self interested, or they are opportunist scum.

Let's begin with the national question. There hasn't been any national liberation in the Soviet Union. What there has been is a reactionary breakup. The prospect this holds before us is not 15 stable bourgeois republics, but rather ethnic war. For those who imagine that this cannot happen in the Soviet Union, just look at the obscenity that still calls itself the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In each of the former Soviet republics there is a rich intermixing of peoples which goes back way before the 1917 revolution. National hatreds in what was the USSR is the class politics of reaction. The proto-bourgeoisie will use nationalism, discrimination, pogroms and wars to further its ambitions. In the potentially nuclear clash of Great Russian chauvinism, pan-Islamism and the myriad petty nationalisms, thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps millions will die.

If, thank heaven, this does not happen, the masses will still pay a high price for the break up of the USSR. Estonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and the other former republics of the Soviet Union were never simply internal colonies, were never held in backward servitude by the Russian bear. In many ways these republics flowered because of Soviet power. Economically they invariably advanced more rapidly than Russia itself. Thus, in the midst of the nationalist lie that they were robbed by Moscow, we hear the nationalist complaint, certainly in the Baltics and Georgia, that backward uncouth Russia is not a fit partner for them. With the break up of what actually was once a solidly integrated and unified economy there will be terrible dislocation, ruination and collapse.

However, even if things are somehow kept together and a unified economy is returned to capitalism smoothly and gently, bourgeois experts tell us that 40 million people would be thrown on to the dole. We can also say, looking at the thousands sleeping rough on the streets of the big cities of rich advanced capitalist countries like Britain and the USA, that along with private property will come massive homelessness.

Citizens of the USSR quite rightly complained about the poky size of their flats and houses. With

capitalism will come houses, for some, that will put the luxury enjoyed by the Nomenklatura into the shade. But the capitalist states that will emerge from what was the USSR will not be advanced. That is what leads us to believe that there will be homelessness of Brazilian, Peruvian or Mexican proportions.

Politically, too, the new capitalist states will owe more to South America than to Western Europe or the USA. Whatever Yeltsin and other bourgeois demagogues claim, the masses will not get US living standards, nor will they get Swedish social democracy. What they'll get is the punctuated and corrupt democracy of the South American sort, hand in hand with death squads and the persecution and banning of working class parties.

Have no doubts, the banning of *Pravda*, the 'suspension' of the Communist Party and the persecution of communists has nothing to do with preventing another State Emergency Committee coup. It is a taste of things to come.

### Effects on the world

Turning aside from internal developments in the Soviet Union for the moment, let us deal with the effects counterrevolution in the USSR will have on the world. The world as a whole will face great dangers because of the August counterrevolution.

Anyone who thinks that China can stand up to imperialism because it has a quarter of the world's population within its borders, is profoundly mistaken. Anyone who imagines that the Chinese bureaucracy has put down any possibility of counterrevolution through the so-called Tiananmen Square massacre is again profoundly mistaken. And what applies to China applies to the three other remaining socialist states - North Korea, Vietnam and above all Cuba.

In more honest moments the bourgeoisie admits that if there were free elections in Cuba tomorrow, Castro and the Communist Party would get some 70% or 80% of the vote. Yet, after the August counterrevolution, how does its propaganda machine present Cuba? It talks about the dictator, the monster in Havana. Castro is portrayed as the butcher of the Cuban masses, not the leader of their liberation. This is all part of the imperialist game plan.

Will the US now simply watch from its Guantanamo naval base while matters run their course? Now that the Soviet nuclear umbrella has been removed, what is to stop the US organising another Bay of Pigs invasion force? After Grenada, Panama and Nicaragua, the Yankee imperialists chillingly boast "three down, one to go".

So the remaining socialist countries are in danger. But more than that, we will also say that war in general is more likely. We always said that the danger of war never came from the existence of any socialist country, never came from the fact that people liberated themselves. It comes from imperialism.

Already, with the decline of Soviet power, the United States has baptised its fledgling new world order with the blood of 100,000 Iraqi conscripts. Its new world order has nothing to do with a new



age of peace. It is a new age of barbarism, a new age of capitalist wars and capitalist destruction. That is what the collapse of the Soviet Union will mean.

Of course, we're not talking about regional wars. It isn't simply that the United States will attempt to re-impose the chains of neocolonialism. The danger of a world war has increased. Again, for those who refuse to recognise this fundamental fact of the modern world, World War I and II owe nothing in their origins to the existence of the Soviet Union. Believe it or not, comrades, the Soviet Union didn't even exist in 1914, but capitalist imperialism did. It was the cause of not one but two world wars in which tens of millions died. The existence of socialism was not.

With the capitulation of Moscow to imperialism, inter-imperialist contradictions have moved centre stage in world politics. The antagonisms between the relatively declining United States and the relatively rising Japan and Germany are, at the moment, tensions over trade. But these will become arguments over spheres of influence and struggles for survival. The 'what do we need them for' criticism of weapons we have today will give way to awesome new weapons of mass destruction and war tomorrow.

Whatever Bush, Major *et al* say, the reason why there hasn't been a World War III yet has everything to do with Soviet nuclear weapons, not US ones. There is abundant evidence that the US would have launched an all out assault on the Soviet Union in 1945 or 46 if it had had sufficient nuclear weapons available. It didn't. Since then the imperialists have issued numerous nuclear blackmail threats and, with each year, new plans for extermination in the Soviet Union, dismembering it and "de-communising" it, were developed: Broiler, Sissler, Bushwhacker and SIOP-6, culminating in Reagan's SDI Star Wars plans.

Well, the Soviet Union has now fallen - not in quite the way that most American generals had imagined, but even though it has not cost the life of a single GI, it has fallen. For the moment Russia and many of the other bourgeois republics which were the Soviet Union might possess masses of nuclear weapons. However, they are in crisis, destined to collapse economically, and no longer in a position to renew them or update them. Nor are they separately or collectively in any position to take a leading role in the world. In world political terms we see it return to pre-1914 status.

## British left

Given all we've said, the left in Britain has played a thoroughly negative role. Just like trade unions, socialism, even bureaucratic socialism, should have been defended against the bosses *unconditionally*. Did the left in Britain do that? Well, as we know, it did not. Because the left in Britain is dominated by opportunism, it either morally dissociated itself from living socialism, like Pontius Pilate, or pathetically tried to sell itself to those who were taking socialism to ruin, like Judas Iscariot.

However, there are those opportunists who have learned something from history - but not much. In 1989 and 1990 the Trotskyites were cock-a-hoop. In Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, Trotsky's political revolution had come. This time, they said, it will be different; Soviet tanks won't come in. Now, with Gorbachev's Sinatra doctrine, the 'political revolution' decapitated in Hungary 1956 and Czechoslovakia 1968, will triumph. Well comrades, we have seen where their so-called political revolution has ended up. Their so-called great workers' leader is in power in Poland, as is their NSF in Romania; the wall is down in Berlin and capitalism has been restored across the board.

They've learned something from this; but, as I said, not much. In August 1991 the Trotskyites at last changed their tune. No longer do we find them rejoicing over the supposed reality of political revolution in the headlines of their papers. Having cast my eye over the Trotskyite press in the last few days I cannot find a single claim that a political revolution of Leon Trotsky's sort has begun. After all, they have the living reality of Eastern Europe to show them what is in store for the Soviet Union.

On that basis, given that more or less everyone recognises that Eastern Europe today is the mirror of the Soviet Union tomorrow, Trotskyite triumphalism has given way to a *conscious* Trotskyite attempt to paint counterrevolution in proletarian colours.

That means what was stupid in Trotskyite politics - a naive belief that *all* spontaneous movements from below were political revolutions - has become, in 1991, contemptible. Now that they *know* that it is counterrevolution on the agenda, there is no excuse for their rotten politics. What goes for the Trotskyites goes also for the rest of the left in Britain. Let's briefly cast our eye over the spectrum.

● **Revolutionary Communist Party.** It says the Soviet Union is falling under the jackboot of imperialism. With the rise of Yeltsin it will join the 'Third World', claims its version of *Marxism Today*. Here's an organisation, I remind you, which was insisting - in its one major theoretical book - that the Soviet Union is incapable of self movement, that if any change came in the Soviet Union it was going to be from outside. It was other countries that were going to cause the Soviet Union to move, according to the RCP's Frank Ferudi. This logic was applied to all the socialist countries. Thus, when it came to counterrevolution in Eastern Europe in 1989, the RCP couldn't see what the "fuss" was about. This organisation was quite prepared to defend finance capital in Iraq, parade with placards bearing the portrait of Gadaffi and call for the victory of the Argentinian forces in the South Atlantic; but it could not bring itself to defend socialism in Eastern Europe - and cannot do so in the Soviet Union, even though it has discovered what all the fuss is about now!

Other left organisations are no better.

● **Militant Tendency.** Militant reports that workers are celebrating on the streets of Moscow and Leningrad because of the failure of the State Emergency Committee coup. Workers in Britain will be celebrating too, it says. But so will the bosses, these 'revolutionary' reformists admit. At last it has been forced to allow reality to interfere with its mechanical "Red 1990s" world view, which only allows developments one way - forwards. Not so long ago it argued that history could not be rolled back, and because of that the very idea of capitalist restoration in Poland was a "chimera"! Now that it has learned from life what we always insisted on in theory, did that galvanise it into issuing calls to defend the USSR in this last moment of truth? No, blind hatred of 'Stalinism' has led it to equate the leadership of the socialist system with the system itself. Militant Tendency therefore says, with Olympian detachment, that workers in the Soviet Union will have to experience capitalism before they can be won to defend socialism!

● **WRP (Workers Press).** This organisation, founded by Gerry Healy, cut its political teeth by branding 'Stalinists' as the *most* counterrevolutionary force in the workers' movement, selling itself to Libya and Iran, and fingering communists for Saddam Hussein's secret police. This political method led the post-Healy WRP to go into raptures over the counterrevolutions of 1989 and 1990. Not surprisingly then, just like Militant, the Yeltsinite counter-coup and the resistance to the State Emergency Committee are given a proletarian gloss. Everything is positive because all the WRP wants to see is workers doing this and workers doing that - as if the world exists on the basis of a working class moving in a one dimensional revolutionary direction. Thus anti-'Stalinism' also leads these people into the camp of reaction when it comes to defending living socialism.

The same applies to the Socialist Workers Party.

● **SWP.** Its paper lauds Yeltsin for his "courage". This is a man who is going to drown socialism, a man who will turn against the workers just as we warned in all certainty that their Lech Walesa would. "Neither Washington nor Moscow" leads the SWP even more surely than the orthodox Trotskyites to portray capitalist counterrevolution as a proletarian movement. Well there might have been workers on the streets of Moscow and Leningrad protesting against the State Emergency Committee in 1991. But then there were workers fighting to smash the 'Stalinist' state in 1941 - they wore the uniform of Hitler's army! The workers who responded to Yeltsin's "courageous" general strike call were not acting as a class for itself but as a class against itself! The working class is not just a sociological concept. It has to be judged politically. When workers follow reactionary politics this does not lead us to call for "victory" to their "resistance", as does *Socialist Worker*. Of course, we must explain why workers in the Soviet Union follow a reactionary path, but there can be no playing "Neither Washington nor Moscow" games when it comes to counterrevolution. What the SWP indulges in is typical of most of the left in Britain - workerism and a worship of abstract democracy. The State Emergency Committee might have stood against democracy and Yeltsin might say he stands for it. But democracy does not exist in isolation from the state; democracy is a form of the state and in the last analysis it is the state that is vital, not its form. Frankly, we prefer bureaucratic authoritarianism over a deformed proletarian state to a capitalist bourgeois democracy. Wallowing in the useless theory of state capitalism, the SWP cannot see any of this when it comes to the real world.

But there are others - the Judases.

● **New Communist Party.** Some comrades have told me that its position isn't too bad. I consider such a judgment monstrous. Well, you know what its position was, don't you? Eric Trevett, NCP general secretary, issued a statement welcoming the State Emergency Committee coup. He thought his day had come. He might have lost Czechoslo-

vakia, he might have lost Ethiopia, but what were they compared to the Soviet Union? After being one of the few organisations around to have welcomed the coup, he obviously thought that it wouldn't be long before he was heading off to Moscow and returning to London with money in large amounts. Then he could afford to employ the posse of full time staff he would like to become accustomed to in his Falcon Road HQ. Of course, none of this has anything to do with political principle. It is political prostitution. Years ago we told the NCP that this would get them nowhere. It certainly doesn't serve the working class. Political prostitution will not advance the cause of the working class in Britain or the world one centimetre. Some might say we are being unfair. No comrades, we are not. I'll give you an example of the NCP's principle from 1989-90. Remember when Ceausescu fell, through a *violent democratic counterrevolution*. What did the NCP say? "Ceausescu? Nothing to do with us! We denounced him long ago; look, our hands are clean!" was its line. The same thing happened over China, too. When the democracy movement was crushed, the NCP said it was nothing to do with them. "China is a capitalist country" they said! The NCP wouldn't know a political principle if it hit them in the face. That is why it tried to sell itself to the butcher Saddam Hussein and *denounced* the communists in Iraq who opposed him! Why it continued to allow its paper, *The New Worker* to be used as a press agency by the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia after it announced that it had given up all pretence at having anything to do with socialism!

● **'Official communists'.** There will always be worse. Perhaps, though, the other 'official communists' - the Euros, *Morning Star* and the Communist Party of Britain - are the bottom of the barrel. These people threw their liberal hands up in horror at the coup and, in the name of legality, called for Gorbachev's return.

Let us engage in a little exercise. This will tell us the story of the coup and the counterrevolution and tell us all about 'official communist' politics. As I said in my introductory remarks, history has speeded up. When we polemicised with the NCP over Poland back in 1980-81, events had speeded up to such an extent that every headline in *The New Worker* - its weekly paper - was made to appear ridiculous. Events had always moved on by the time the readership received it, in spite of its editor's weekly attempt to pin them down at the moment of going to press. When Solidarnosc was legalised, the editor came out with a lead story assuring his readers that there would be no new unions in Poland! When Poland was in the midst of economic chaos, the editor of *The New Worker* wrote about Poland's problems being exaggerated. He said there were no economic problems in Poland except problems of overheating - and he didn't mean the central heating. He was talking about a boom economy!

In the Soviet Union events moved even faster. Now, in order to see opportunism visibly made ridiculous, we have to turn to a *daily*. In the *Morning Star* we have it.

August 20: "Gorbachev ousted", it screamed; "military on the streets of Moscow", ran its headline. Inside it reported the statement of the Communist Party of Britain's general secretary Mike Hicks. Obviously he hadn't taken too much time off work to write it. He demanded Gorbachev's reinstatement and denounced the coup as unconstitutional, as did the editorial. This is in spite of the editor owning up to the fact that under Gorbachev capitalism was coming back, socialism was in danger and the country was disintegrating. "He could have been criticised for all this", said the brave Tony Chater. The problem was, of course, that his *Morning Star* never did, at least up until August 20, ie the day after Gorbachev was seemingly overthrown. No, instead Chater's paper had produced theoretical justification for perestroika and 'market socialism' and defended a *British Road to Socialism* programme that states that the 'reform of socialism' in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has nothing to do with the restoration of capitalism!

August 21: "Bring back Gorbachev - Bush"; and, with neither attack nor demur, the entire front page was given over to the words of the world's number one imperialist. A communist paper? A paper of the broad left? A paper of pro-imperialism! That's the *Morning Star*! Bring back Gorbachev, says imperialism; and 'official communism' and imperialism get their way.

August 22: "Gorbachev returns to Moscow"; he's back and "in full control". Good, said the *Morning Star*; a "peoples victory" said its editorial.

August 23: "A great day for Perestroika!" ran the top headline and along the lower half of the same front page it ran: "Yeltsin goes for the communist jugular"! What about the editorial? "Danger signals!" was its title. But wait a minute; what do we read? ... "As with the A-level results, students, teachers and parents can take encouragement from the GCSE results this year." That tells us more than a little about the complacency of 'official communism'.

August 24: Headline: "Russian party suspended -

Yeltsin hammers the communists." And what does the editorial say this time? "Stop the witch hunt". Apparently this "hammering" isn't right. Not all the communists took part in the coup. Some are very nice and don't deserve such treatment.

Thus within five days we have the whole story of the coup and counter-coup. We also have all any genuine communist needs to know about the *Morning Star*-CPB brand of 'official communism' and where it leads. Such opportunism is not confined to one organisation. Opportunism has its social roots in capitalism. Thus opportunism has a logic. It might begin with great parties making little 'mistakes', but it ends in the camp of the bourgeoisie. That is the lesson that is taught by August 1914, when the mass parties of Social Democracy went over to the bourgeoisie (with one exception, the Bolsheviks). The same thing has happened in our period of history with 'official communism'.

Surely, taking into account the counterrevolution in what was the USSR, the CPB will draw some far reaching programmatic conclusions, won't it? It surely must. Just read its *British Road to Socialism*. Apparently why we can get socialism peacefully in Britain is because of the world balance of forces. In the 1960s this shifted decisively, irreversibly, to socialism. Because of the strength of socialism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, all we in Britain need do is to put a cross every five years on a ballot paper and go on regular mass demonstrations in order to give our Labour MP's the extra-parliamentary support they need to legislate in the first stage of communism ... well that was how the CPB would have it.

So we are looking forward with keen expectation to another statement from their Mike Hicks. I know he doesn't venture into print often - he has, after all, better things to do. But the occasion demands it, and I'm confident that as an honest man he won't leave us disappointed. In a few days he will announce that all that stuff about a peaceful road to socialism has been junked. There has been a decisive shift in the world balance of forces *against socialism*, and as a result Mike Hicks will declare that his organisation is returning to the road to socialism advocated by Lenin - illegality, violence and proletarian revolution.

Comrades, I trust you detected the slight hint of irony in my voice. The CPB will do no such thing. It will remain committed body and soul to its miserable reformist utopia.

These people only ever used the so-called shift in the world balance of forces as a convenient excuse. It was never an honest position. The peaceful parliamentary road was always reformism dressed up as revolution, and as such it represented an advanced state of 'official communist' opportunism. To see where that leads, one only needs look at the putrefying Euros.

The Euros have just one purpose. The bosses' media can wheel out Nina Temple whenever necessary for the purposes of anti-communist propaganda. "I never had anything to do with Marxism-Leninism" she bleats, "it is far too dogmatic", etc. Having thus performed, she is sent away with a pat on the head ... and maybe a cheque in the hand.

'Official communism' - NCP, CPB and Euro - is on the edge of liquidation, on the verge of extinction. Frankly, it deserves to collapse and will collapse. Already there are forces in the CPB, not least at the top, that are putting the knife into any suggestion of unity with the NCP.

In aid of this the *Morning Star*, for the first time that I can remember, published a letter from the general secretary of the NCP. Trevett's little missive in support of the coup was published late - that was to be expected. It was published after Gorbachev got back in; but it was published ... underneath an accompanying picture of one of the three people killed in Moscow during the coup. "Was it worth it?" ran the caption. This is cynical pseudo humanitarism worthy of *The Sun* or the *Daily Mirror*. More people must have been killed in London traffic accidents that day. But it had its desired effect. The *Morning Star* began reporting meetings being cancelled between the CPB and the NCP. Our concern isn't to save the unity moves of these opportunists; we've always said that these would come to grief when put to the test. Our concern is to bury opportunism of all varieties.

## Russian backwardness

There is one question above all that demands an answer from genuine communists. The question is obvious. Why has the Soviet Union reached this point? To answer, we must begin with basics.

What is socialism? Well, for us socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat. It's the first stage of communism. In a genuine sense, it begins with the highest that capitalism has achieved. Yet, as we all know, socialism in Russia did not begin with high but backward capitalism. That did not mean it was the result of subjective whim. It was not some madcap Bolshevik experiment at social grafting.



as was claimed by Kautsky.

We can only understand the Russian revolution in the context of imperialism, its contradictions, and the dialectics of world revolution. Russia was a weak link in the capitalist world chain. On that basis Lenin planned to make revolution, a peculiar sort of revolution, though: a democratic revolution that would be a Russian version of the French revolution, a Russian version of Cromwell's revolution. Peculiar though, in the sense that it would be led by the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie. But Lenin's revolution was not confined to the tasks of bourgeois revolution. His democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry would carry the revolution through *uninterruptedly* to the tasks of socialism and act as a spark that would ignite the world revolution, beginning in Europe.

If this were done, politically advanced Russia would receive the economic assistance necessary to smooth its way to a successful transition to socialism. And as the world revolution proceeded, politically Russia would go from its vanguard to its rearguard.

In 1914 capitalist general crisis broke out. It took the form of bloody inter-imperialist world war that was answered from below, by the masses.

What was unique about Russia wasn't its revolution, but the fact that its revolution alone survived. That was unique and unexpected. There were revolutions in Germany and in Hungary, and a possibility of revolutions in other European capitalist countries. However, because of communist inexperience and social democratic treachery, they were crushed. If the German revolution in particular had succeeded, we would be living in a very different world. The twilight of the 20th century would surely have seen capitalism finally eclipsed and a socialism well advanced along the road to communism. Unfortunately it was not to be. The bright hopes of socialism in Germany gave way to the nightmare of Nazi fascism and a second imperialist world war.

The consequences for Russia were tragic. The spark of revolution found itself cut off from the oxygen necessary if it was to flourish. Under these unexpected conditions, communists found themselves skating on theoretical thin ice. They tended to react to events, rather than have a clear vision of the road ahead.

In spite of this, Lenin was very clear about the need to defend the Soviet Union. Whatever the consequences, it was necessary to defend this gain of the working class. Because of it, imperialism's world domination had been broken. As a bastion of revolution it could be a beacon, a centre from which to organise the world revolution. It was with this in mind that Lenin approached the economic and political problems that built up and threatened to overwhelm the new regime.

Lenin was fully conscious that in order to survive, many painful temporary retreats within Russia would be necessary. Where leftists flinched, Lenin acted. War communism gave way to NEP semi-capitalism.

Socialism in Russia was a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it was dictatorship over an almost feudal level of capitalism. Lenin made clear that there would be negative political consequences. Socialism in Russia existed in a peasant sea; moreover, the working class had been decimated by interventionist and civil war. By the early 1920s the dictatorship hung by a thread - the Communist Party and, crucially, its 2,000 strong old guard.

The danger was that this stratum in Soviet society could become bourgeoisified. While Lenin tried all sorts of measures to combat this process, the backward conditions of Russia often meant that things turned into their opposites. Attempts to combat bureaucracy produced bureaucratic monsters like Stalin's Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate. Every official wound up with a bureaucrat looking over their shoulder making sure they weren't being bureaucratic!

Nonetheless, within Lenin's desperation we see a single-minded determination to hold back bureaucracy, combat the effects of Russia's economic backwardness on its political vanguard. He was only partially successful. We should not have any illusions about the sort of proletarian state that existed under Lenin. It's all very well talking about proletarian and soviet democracy. Yes, it existed, but only momentarily. What existed under Lenin from 1918 onwards was socialism showing its dictatorial side all the way along the line.

However, after Lenin's premature death in 1924, the Party joined the state in falling victim to Russia's economic backwardness. The Communist Party degenerated.

Under Lenin's leadership it was the vanguard of world communism, had a clear sighted vision of the world revolution, subordinated its national revolution to the world revolution.

Stalin reversed the formula. Everyone knows his famous pamphlet *Foundations of Leninism* and how in the first edition he quite rightly wrote that the Russian revolution was *dependent* on the world revolution. Everyone also knows that for the second edition Stalin and his secretaries had scoured the works of Lenin in a scholastic, monk-

ish fashion in order to find the quotes needed to justify national opportunism. Ripped out of context, Lenin was used as a justification for breaking Russia from the world revolution.

This was not a foolish political mistake. It reflected the *conservative* interests of what had become a *bureaucratic caste*. As in all forms of opportunism, there was a logic. What began in 1924 as plucking the odd quote from Lenin out of context, ended with Gorbachev and Yeltsin backing counterrevolution in 1991.

Things might have been different if Lenin had lived. But then, as Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, said later, "If Lenin had lived they would have clapped him into prison". Maybe or maybe not; what we want to do, though, is not indulge in speculation; rather we must make clear that there was nothing inevitable about what happened in the Soviet Union. It wasn't predetermined. Communists should have resisted and could have won.

Of course, they didn't win. Socialism took a bureaucratic form, with which the leadership fully identified itself. Indeed, the horror and backwardness of Russia was presented as the realisation of heaven on earth. The Soviet Union, to quote Stalin in 1936, was capable, by its own unaided efforts, of building communism in one country, a state that would need neither money nor armed bodies of men - except, that is, a few border guards. Idealist nonsense of course, but that is what he said, and what the world communist movement loyally parroted.

Under socialism there are essentially strategic three choices: it can go forwards, try to stay still or go backwards. While temperament and subjective outlook play a role here, in essence the choices before socialism reflect material, objective interests. Those who claimed they could build communism in an isolated USSR obviously had a hidden bureaucratic sectional agenda. Because really moving forward to communism would necessitate their abolition, they decided on the politics of keeping things as they were. Because going back to capitalism would lead to the loss of their power and privilege, they did the same.

In the long term this middle road is illusory. It's like saying that we can have matter without movement. Socialism, by definition, has to move, just like everything else. At the end of the day it has to move forward to communism or back to capitalism. For base sectional reasons, those who defend sectional privilege will, whatever their intentions, ultimately turn on socialism itself.

The formal nature of socialism in the USSR meant that the bureaucracy wasn't the servant of society; it was the master - obviously an inherent danger in socialism, a theoretical question which we have to tackle, not only in the light of what has happened in the Soviet Union, but in the light of our very understanding of socialism.

Socialism is a transitional society, where the ruling class - the working class - starts out not yet able to rule directly, and in many senses retains the features of an oppressed class. Just like the oppressed sex, only communism can bring it full liberation. That isn't a call for passive acceptance. No, it's a call for action. Mass participatory socialist democracy was never a luxury. It is a necessity for socialism, not only to combat the bureaucracy through regular elections, recallability and putting an average skilled worker's pay ceiling on the salaries of all elected officials and Party members carrying out state functions. Socialist democracy is necessary if socialism is to show its real potential and superiority over capitalism.

Without socialist democracy, the socialist plan becomes a mockery. It becomes at best a military style plan with all the wastage, sullen resentment, alienation and quiet sabotage which that entails - countless orders issued from the comfort of the officers' mess, but in the real world they remain half or totally unfulfilled. That was living socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The bureaucratic plan could, in its youth, throw caution to the wind and, like a daring general, storm targets. This method industrialised the Soviet Union and gave it the wherewithal to expand its power throughout Eastern Europe. But in the age of science, high tech electronics, the microchip and automation, this form of socialism went from being a relative fetter on the development of the productive forces to an absolute one.

Bureaucratic socialism, which in the 1930s could double Soviet GNP in the midst of world capitalist slump, which in the 1940s could withstand the Barbarossa body blow and then go on to rip the guts out of the Nazi war machine and outstrip the growth rates of capitalism over the two decades that followed, went into its own general crisis. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, growth slipped year by year. In the 1990s Soviet 'growth' became negative.

This crisis is obviously associated with broad changes in the world economy. Nevertheless it cannot be emphasised too strongly that what has happened in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is the result of bureaucratic socialism's particular laws and self movement.

Being a crisis of a bureaucratic form of socialism, this crisis was also a crisis of the bureaucracy.

Either the working class had to organise under the leadership of genuine communists, and through a real political revolution turn this master of society into its servant, or the bureaucracy would attempt to save itself by turning to capitalism.

Ideological weakness among the communists, the masses' association of communism with the bureaucracy in the socialist countries, the general passivity of the working class in the capitalist countries, the continued world hegemony of capitalism, meant that history was flowing against us. Instead of political revolution, living socialism was swept away by mainly peaceful *democratic* counterrevolution - yes, in which sections of the bureaucracy took a leading role, hoping to transform themselves into capitalists.

The crisis of bureaucratic socialism was comprehensive. If there had only been a crisis below, the masters of society could have sent the tanks in; that is what happened in 1956 and 1968. Tony Chater, the editor of the *Morning Star* - whom the ignorant bourgeois media dubs a 'tankie' - says tanks don't solve anything. Well, that's not true. Under certain circumstances tanks do solve things. Ask Stalin. He solved the problem of German invasion with tanks.

However, you can only keep the masses passive with tanks if, after you have sent them onto the streets, you give the population steadily increasing living standards. Yes, that might have been a crude bureaucratic way to handle problems, but as long as bureaucratic socialism was only a relative fetter, it could do it. It did in Hungary after 1956 and in Czechoslovakia after 1968. Even in Poland, the chronically crisis ridden regime was able to give the masses more money and sausages until the mid 1970s.

With the general crisis of socialism there were no longer such possibilities. Jaruzelski's December 1981 coup couldn't offer the working class anything positive. All it could offer them was soaring price rises and harder work. The same applied in the other socialist countries, and it was this that made those regimes untenable. Bureaucratic socialism's point of general crisis had arrived. The working class bureaucracy recognised that its days were over. It could no longer justify itself in the name of society, it stopped believing in itself; a leading section began looking for sectional salvation in a return to capitalism.

## Bureaucratic counterrevolution

The bureaucracy attempted to carry out a slow, controlled transition to capitalism, a non-risk transition was bound to be more than risky; it was in fact bound to be suicidal. The general crisis of bureaucratic socialism means that palace coups turn into social counterrevolutions. In order to finally lay to rest all the Trotskyite nonsense about counterrevolution being political revolution and the bourgeois hype about a peoples' revolt for capitalism, it's worth noting the way socialism first began to unravel.

The Czechoslovak 'velvet revolution' was triggered by the death of a student, killed at the hands of the riot police. In front of well placed press and TV cameras his lifeless limp body was covered with a standard issue blanket before being removed by an unmarked ambulance. The truth was, though, that this young man was never killed. He was never even injured. He was an agent of the Czech version of the KGB, the STB, planted in the opposition. The STB that staged his 'death'. It did so with Gorbachev's full knowledge. This 'master politician' believed that he could get rid of the 'hardline' Husak and his ilk and, with some extra-bureaucratic pressure, open the way for a Czech version of himself. Predictably, the whole thing backfired and developed its own unstoppable *independent* counterrevolutionary momentum.

A similar Gorbachev inspired palace coup wrecked socialism in Romania. Ceaucescu was overthrown because he was deeply despised by the mass of the population; but it was done by an army, working to a plan which Gorbachev knew all about and approved.

As in Czechoslovakia and Romania, across Eastern Europe similar attempts at Gorbachevite plastic surgery ended in the death of the socialist patient. Being head to toe a monochrome functionary, Gorbachev understood everything about the politics of bureaucratic power - all very well in 'normal' grey times - but nothing about the elemental politics of revolution, nor counterrevolution.

So let us turn to the nature of the August 19 coup. Stating the obvious, this was a coup by a section of the bureaucracy. It was an attempt to save the *regime*, not socialism. As a coup by a socially doomed section of society, ie the bureaucracy, it was, I suppose, inevitably botched.

These people really could not face up to what they would have to do if they were to strike the forces of counterrevolution. They wanted to get rid

of Gorbachev. But they imagined they could do it in the same way that Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny got rid of Krushchev in October 1964. They imagined that all they needed to do was get a vote on the Central Committee, then it would all be plain sailing. Pathetic, absolutely pathetic.

Not surprisingly, these epigones of Brezhnev made a complete mess of their coup. The first law of the military art is decisiveness. When you strike, show no mercy. When you move, mean to win. Crush your enemy. Put the fear of god into their hearts. Battles aren't won by how many people are killed. They are won through terror. The last thing you want to do, therefore, is to let things drag out, because that's messy, costly and risky.

What did the State Emergency Committee lot do? They arrested Gorbachev in his isolated Crimean dacha - so far so good. They put tanks on the streets of Moscow, Leningrad, etc. But then they acted in the manner of the Grand Old Duke of York - they had the tanks tour around and around in a completely useless and demoralising fashion. The putschists did not even cut off the telephones! That's the first thing any aspiring Third World dictator would do, but not the State Emergency Committee! Opposition papers continued to publish, reporters from Radio Liberty freely phoned out from the White House, the Russian parliament, which became a Versailles in the heart of Moscow ... Marx criticised the 1871 Paris Commune because it did not snuff out 'suburban' Versailles.

We're not giving advice to the conservative bureaucracy; we're merely observing their abject failure in a purely technical sense and drawing political conclusions. Because this sub-caste did not believe in itself, it botched things militarily ... and it also botched things politically.

Who would go to a population fearful that, with perestroika, capitalism is going to be restored - that millions, tens of millions, are going to be unemployed, hyper-inflation will roar and the economy will collapse - and say that we've ousted the initiator of this policy, but we are going to carry out the very same programme? Only a fool ... no, only the historically exhausted.

The masses were thus politically handed over to counterrevolution. If there is going to be inflation and unemployment, the masses reasoned, at least we want to be able to protest, at least we will be able to shout against it. That's what Yeltsin was promising: real perestroika, but glasnost. The State Emergency Committee was promising perestroika without glasnost.

No wonder their coup attempt failed. It was not, as the NCP's Eric Trevett argued in his pathetic letter to the *Morning Star*, a coup attempt by genuine Marxist-Leninists. It wasn't a coup attempt by people who wanted to restore the Soviet Union to socialism. It was a desperate and doomed attempt to save the old bureaucratic regime - doomed because it could not mobilise any social base or produce any positive political programme.

Should we have designated the coup leaders, the eight man State Emergency Committee, the *main* counterrevolutionary force in the Soviet Union during its short reign? No, that would have been a mistake. Despite the ban on strikes and political activity, despite the tanks and the suspension of glasnost, it was quite clear that the *main* counterrevolutionary force remained Yeltsin and the proto-bourgeois forces around him. They were our main enemy. But does that mean that we should have given the coup leaders some sort of critical support? Again, we would say no. Even though they still presided over a socialist state, were attempting to salvage the regime, their actions, 'programme', etc., were purely sectional.

The August 19 coup presented a brief opportunity for independent working class action against all factions of counterrevolution. That was the only thing positive in the coup. Unfortunately though, the effect of the coup was highly contradictory. Its attempt to slow down the pace of counterrevolution actually speeded it up. History was flowing against us. The window of last opportunity lasted 60 hours, where we needed at least six years.

## Short reaction

Clearly reaction, not revolution, is the dominant feature of our day, but not for long. In spite of the massive loss we have suffered with the collapse of the USSR - the world revolutionary centre - the period of reaction we are living through will, in historic terms, be brief. There are a number of reasons why we believe this to be the case.

Ironically, the August 19 coup itself pointed to the growing importance of democracy in advanced societies in general. We've already spoken about this in respect to socialist societies, but it also applies to capitalist societies. No one can run a sophisticated society on the basis of naked dictatorship and a hostile population. Argument, discussion, the flow of ideas, are socially necessary. Ask any scientist. However, this is not only a research question. It is a question that affects every sphere of life, not least the economy. That is why, in



advanced capitalist countries, fascist counterrevolution needs a mass movement; and why, in our time, the imperialist bourgeoisie has done everything to capture for itself the banner of democracy. While in the last analysis bourgeois rule relies on force, we would be very foolish to belittle the growing role of *active consent*.

This is a double edged sword, however. Capitalist democracy, even the most liberal and rational, is a facade. Who owns the means of production is always of far greater importance than any number of general elections or protest movements. Nevertheless democracy can be turned against those who imagine that it is their exclusive possession. The *immediate* or *minimum* programme of our reformed Communist Party will seek to push democracy *within capitalism* to its limits; we begin with a very simple demand, that workers must fight for what they need. Housing, work, a full life are, though, demands that even the most advanced capitalist countries can't grant and certainly won't guarantee. Any system that can't guarantee such basic needs at this stage in human history deserves to go.

What makes us sure, though, that the present period of reaction will be shortlived, and that millions who identify with capitalism today will be fighting against it tomorrow, is that although bureaucratic socialism has collapsed, this *coincides* with capitalism's drift towards a new general crisis. Yes, paradox abounds. Despite having vast new areas of the world suddenly opened up for capitalist exploitation, this very victory will expose its own self limitations and possibly speed up its momentum towards its own general crisis.

From the middle of the 19th century, capitalism has managed to massively extend the time span between its periodic general crises. From every five years, the time span from boom to

general crisis was stretched first to ten years and then in our century to forty or fifty years.

There is a price to pay. The crises are far more devastating, far more dangerous. Thus, where the comparatively sluggish industrial revolution produced tremors in the political system when it went into crisis, the unprecedented great boom of the 1950s and 60s has laid in store the biggest socio-economic explosion in the whole history of capitalism.

As we know, capitalism is pregnant with crisis; its upturn oscillations are fleeting, speculative and unimpressive. Stagnation, decline and decay are more and more the dominant features. The crisis has been put off, plugged by an ever greater piling up of the credit system. In its turn, this only exacerbates the system's contradictions and its 'need' to resolve them through crisis. It can't go on for ever. Sooner or later the whole edifice will blow.

With the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe suddenly falling into the imperialist sphere, the capitalist credit system will have to be taken to new, and even more unstable, heights. If an economic meltdown is to avoided in these countries, huge amounts of credit will have to be conjured up. The resulting debt will dwarf anything we've seen in Latin America. But who's going to pay for it? The USA is hardly awash with surplus capital. It can't organise a new Marshall Plan and the hundreds of billions of dollars needed by the former socialist states. The US is now the world's biggest debtor.

What about Western Europe and the EC? Western Europe is in no position either. Its economic powerhouse, Germany, has got more than enough problems incorporating the former GDR and its relatively tiny 17 million population (and a few million others in Eastern Europe who've suddenly discovered they've got German blood coursing through their veins, thanks to a long forgotten

grandparent).

What about Japan? We have been told that Japan is the economy of the 21st century. A joke. Japan is in mortal danger from the construction of fortress Europe. To avoid being squeezed out of the lucrative and vital EC market it is concentrating all its efforts on exporting capital as quickly as it can into Western Europe. That is why Japan, along with the United States, has been saying no massive loans, no massive credit, only 'advice' to the former socialist countries.

Japan fears for its own longterm survival. Its carefully engineered social stability has been purchased on the basis of over-exporting to Western Europe. A fortress Europe and perhaps now a Nafta fortress around the US would put paid to the Japanese miracle and bring the militant communist revolutionary tradition among its workers back to life.

So capitalism is not on the verge of a new golden age. What it offers humanity is a new age of horror, crisis and war.

As we've argued, the next capitalist general crisis will be unprecedented in its destructiveness. But more than that: as the history of the 20th century shows, capitalist crises now go hand in hand with war. Capitalism's last general crisis began with World War I and ended with World War II. If capitalism is allowed to continue, a World War III is *inevitable*. That is the future which capitalism holds for humanity.

## Communist organisation

The idea that the Soviet Union could impose a permanent state of peaceful coexistence on capi-

talism is obviously no longer relevant. It was always wrong and, as can be seen by the counter-revolution, it played into the hands of the imperialists.

What was true of communist-pacifism remains true of pacifism. This ideology must be ruthlessly exposed. The end of the Soviet Union does not mean that war is less likely. Quite the opposite. It really is a choice between communist civilisation and imperialist barbarism.

During this period of 'official communist' crisis, bureaucratic socialist collapse, capitalist reaction and drift towards a new general crisis, the need for communists to be organised, steadfast and prepared cannot be over emphasised. In Britain what that means is fighting to reforge the CPGB and accepting the discipline of the Provisional Central Committee.

Communists must be organised in a real communist organisation and prepared for combat at the shortest notice. One thing the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union should have taught, if it taught nothing else, is that things can change very quickly. So the fight for the Communist Party must not be put off to tomorrow. Communist discipline and building the Party begins in the here and now, because if we only begin tomorrow, when it matters, it will be too late.

We can't promise comrades an easy time. All we can promise is blood, sweat, toil, and tears - but it will be worth it. We have a communist vision of the future that is worth fighting for, worth dying for, worth living one's life for.

That is why, at a time when traitors all over the world are sneering, and cowards are flinching, we'll keep the red flag flying.

# ACTION

## Communist Party

London Seminars: 5pm Sundays. Details 071-431 3135

This seminar series provides collective discussion to assist the CPGB Provisional Central Committee in drawing up its Draft Programme, section by section. The Draft Programme will be published subsequently for discussion within the class, as a guide to action and as a rallying point for the reforging of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Join in the debate. Fight to forge the weapon of the proletarian party in Britain.

(The second part of each seminar is a weekly discussion on current political developments.):

September 1: No seminar.

September 8: Classes in the revolution.

September 15: The revolutionary government and constitution.

September 22: Economic demands.

Communist Party streetwork and campaigning in the four constituencies where we have adopted prospective parliamentary candidates:

Glasgow Central (Tam Dean Burn)

Rhondda (Mark Fischer)

Bethnal Green and Stepney (Stan Kelsey)

Brent East (Anne Murphy)

Offers of help please to 071-431 3135

Posters (A2) and stickers: "Leninism Lives!" and "CPGB".

Ring 071-431 3135, or send donation with order to our box number.



Central Organ of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain

## Hands Off Ireland!

HOI! EASTER MARCH:

Easter Saturday 1992 (April 18)

Troops out now!

Self determination for the Irish nation!

London: activist meetings and actions. Details 071-431 3135.

HOI! T-Shirts: Be the sharpest anti-imperialist on your street. T-shirts, all extra large, £6 each (including p&p) from our box number.

## Workers Theatre Movement

Performers for WTM Club *The Internationale* please contact Tam on 071-431 3135.

Rehearsals in London. Phone Tam on 071-431 3135 or write to WTM, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX for details of WTM activities.

## Unemployed Workers Charter

UWC NATIONAL MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

London, February 1992

Send SAE for UWC petition and sponsorship letter.

London organising meetings: For details ring 071-431 3135.

*Unemployed Organiser* - 20p each plus 10p p&p. Send for details of bulk order rates).

# 8TH SUMMER OFFENSIVE

THE SUMMER of 1991 has not been a period of rest and holidays for supporters of this paper, but a time of intense political activity, as well as intensive spending. Thanks to the Communist Party's 8th Summer Offensive, this is being matched by intense fundraising - and, it must be said, financial self sacrifice.

Mobilising for the UWC's Glasgow lobby of the TUC has been going at full steam throughout August, and communist streetwork has been focussed on the four constituencies with Communist prospective parliamentary candidates.

The Soviet bureaucratic coup and counterrevolution demanded an appropriate response from our organisation, and that response has been forthcoming. The PCC was able to publish its statement about the coup on the day of the coup itself, and hundreds of readers and sympathisers were contacted for the Soviet crisis meeting in London, using the crisis to argue the urgent necessity for re-forging our Communist Party.

Our plans to publish a pamphlet on the Soviet counterrevolution, followed by Jack Conrad's *Which Road?* book, coupled with making the tempo of publication of *The Leninist* fort-

nightly *in practice*, are made achievable by our new laser printer and extra computer equipment, purchased with Summer Offensive money.

The fact is, however, that we are spending money as fast as we can raise it. You can be confident that money given to our embryonic Communist Party will not sit around gathering dust. It is not only money well spent, but money quickly spent!

Some comrades have argued that we should not be standing candidates in the general election because the money would be better spent in other ways. The fact is, we don't have the money yet! The CPGB Election Fund is open, and the money needed has to be raised in the course of the campaign.

First, however, we have to finish the Summer Offensive. Having extended the period by one month to the end of August, the time is now up - but there is still time to send in last minute donations, or pledges, to take us over our ambitious £30,000 target before the total is announced next weekend.

At the time of writing the total monies pledged amount to £28,827 - a record figure, but leaving just £1,173 to find. Can you take us over the top?

Stan Kelsey

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Europe	£11	£22
Rest of World	£13	£26

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